

S/S 205121

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

March 17, 1972

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: President Bhutto's Proposals  
for Closer Military Collaboration

President Bhutto of Pakistan has informed our Charge that the GOP seeks closer military collaboration with us and is prepared to make land and port facilities available for our use.

This offer is the culmination in a series of representations since the December Indo-Pak war. Bhutto himself indicated in a recent interview with Sulzberger that he would like to strengthen the 1959 U.S./Pak Bilateral Agreement and get American arms, noting at the same time the political problems this would create for us during an election year. Bhutto has also expressed his concerns over the Soviet role in Pakistan's defeat in the war. We have been informed that Pakistan will become more active in CENTO. Foreign Ministry Secretary General Aziz Ahmed, in telling us of his plans to come here next week, spoke of a desire to get our views on a restored balance of power in South Asia.

The following specific proposals are involved:

- Pakistan is prepared to make available for our use port and "tracking station" facilities along the Arabian sea coast near Karachi.
- The GOP is thinking of "access to facilities as needed" and not of large numbers of American personnel.
- Pakistan would also welcome collaboration in strategic military planning.

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This latest offer spoke also of Pakistan's need to "bolster up its defenses in order to provide some credible deterrent". According to the GOP, Peking "would not mind closer military collaboration between Pakistan and the U.S."

Bhutto's objectives in all this seem fairly clear. He has already taken steps to strengthen his security relationship with China. He now seeks to add a closer security association with us. He may feel the prospects are fairly good because of our expressed concern over Soviet policy toward India and our developing relations with China. He has been skeptical about Soviet policies toward Pakistan, although doing what he can to rebuild closer relations with the USSR.

What is not clear is how these overtures to us relate to Bhutto's longer range intentions toward India. On the whole, Bhutto's hardliner past on India has been subdued since he took power and there has been some evidence that he recognizes the need for a basic reorientation of past Pakistani policies toward India.

It is clear, given the major change in the South Asian equation after the December war, that we could not and should not seek to build up Pakistan as any kind of strategic counterweight to India. As we see it our basic policy objective in South Asia should now be to encourage movement toward a broad political settlement which would replace the sharp political-military confrontation that has plagued the Subcontinent for more than 20 years. In Pakistan this would require, in addition to our continued support for its territorial integrity and economic growth, that we encourage Bhutto in every way open to us to move in the direction of a basic settlement with India and that we avoid any action in the military field that would encourage Pakistan again to postpone the difficult decisions it must make if it is to reach a basic accommodation with its stronger neighbor. We would encourage India to recognize that a magnanimous policy toward Pakistan will

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serve India's longer term interest by contributing to stability in the region. Against these objectives we believe that in our Pakistan policy in the coming months we should:

- Continue strong support for Pakistan's economic development.
- Defer any decisions on resumed military supply until the outlook for Indo-Pak talks is more clear.
- Indicate our appreciation of Bhutto's offer of base facilities but respond that we do not at the present time envisage a need for such facilities.
- Remain open to any specific proposals in port expansion and development as a part of our economic development contributions.

If you concur, we would begin a dialogue with the Pakistanis along these lines, beginning with the visit here next week of Foreign Ministry Secretary General Aziz Ahmed and continuing with President Bhutto when Ambassador Farland returns to Islamabad in early April.

  
William P. Rogers

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